



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy No.: DOC 3.2.2	Subject: <b>FACILITY ESCAPES</b>
Chapter 3: FACILITY OPERATIONS	Page 1 of 14, plus 3 attachments
Section 2: Safety and Emergency Procedures	Revision Date: January 7, 1999
Signature: /s/ Rick Day, Director 2/17/99	Effective Date: Aug. 1, 1996

**I. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections that all correctional facilities must establish procedures designed to prevent offender escapes, which are based on facility security, and the safety of the public, staff and offenders.

**II. AUTHORITY:**

Section 45-7-306, MCA. Escape  
DOC Policy 3.1.8, Use of Force

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

**Correctional Facility:** For the purposes of this policy, a correctional facility includes:

- 1) Montana State Prison
- 2) Montana Women's Prison
- 3) Pine Hills
- 4) Treasure State Correctional Training Center
- 5) Riverside Youth Correctional Facility
- 6) Billings Transition Center
- 7) Great Falls Juvenile Transition Center
- 8) Community Correctional Facilities under contract to the Department
- 9) Intensive Supervision Programs (Persons on Inmate Status)

**IV. PROCEDURES:**

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Escape policies and procedures shall be reviewed annually, updated as required, and classified as restricted information. Procedures shall also be implemented by all facilities to ensure employees are trained in the provisions of the escape plans.

#### **A. Escape Prevention**

Attention to the following measures will assist in reducing the probability of escape attempts and should be incorporated into each facility's orientation, basic or annual in-service training curriculum:

- # Alert detection and prompt report of unrest or tension in the offender populations.
- # Observation and report of abnormal changes in offender behavior.
- # Prompt correction of construction or damaged-related security breaches and the provision of adequate interim security coverage between the time a weakness is discovered and the time final repairs are made.
- # Provision of work, recreation and/or self-improvement programs for offenders.
- # Appropriate classification, and classification review, of all offenders in or entering the facility, including accurate designation of offenders likely to pose an escape threat.
- # Proper consideration of legitimate offender complaints or needs.
- # Prompt, decisive, and suitable action in response to problems that arise.
- # Implementation of a system of security inspections, frequent counts, and supervised movement.
- # Provision of appropriate work and living assignments in accordance with offender custody classification.
- # The appropriate use of qualified and trained personnel.
- # Adequate tool, key and material control.
- # Information gained from outgoing correspondence and the monitoring of telephone calls.
- # Fully implemented security procedures with special emphasis on not becoming too predictable in the application of those procedures.

#### **B. Policy Review and Approval**

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All escape policies and procedures shall be critiqued by local law enforcement agencies for comments/suggestions, and reviewed and approved by the Department's Investigation Unit. Escape policies for community correctional facilities/programs, under contract with the Department, will also be reviewed and approved by the Community Corrections Division. Mutual aid agreements shall be established where applicable with local law enforcement agencies to ensure a cooperative effort in all areas relating to offender escapes.

### **C. Policy Development**

Good correctional practice dictates that a number of common elements must be addressed when developing escape policies and procedures. For that reason, the following list represents the issues that will be addressed in most escape policies. There will be individual circumstances and differences that exist in each correctional facility that may not require addressing all issues listed:

#### **1. Immediate Notification/Information**

Direct observation, or information received, of an escape, or escape attempt, will trigger immediate action by facility personnel, as will any unauthorized absence from a work detail, living area, or other location.

The issues to address include:

- # evaluation of the situation
- # notification of the facility's control center
- # disseminating facts relevant to the escape/attempted escape
- # procedures for activating escape alarms
- # securing the facility and taking offender counts
- # establishing initial perimeters and deploying staff
- # surveying the need for available and additional manpower/ resources
- # searching the facility/grounds
- # mobilization of additional staff and security forces

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- # determining "escape posts" that must be supervised and vacating non-essential posts
- # victim notification.

## **2. Command Staff and General Staff Notification Procedures**

Staff notification plans shall list the positions which are critical to the immediate operation of the facility and which positions may be vacated, freeing staff members to assist in a search of the facility, grounds and surrounding area. Adequate staff coverage shall always be maintained in order to provide normal supervision of offenders not involved in the emergency.

The issues to address include:

- # assignment of a staff person to contact off-duty employees
- # notification of staff during normal working hours
- # notification of staff after regular administrative hours
- # development of a command staff notification checklist, to include:
  - Warden/Superintendent/Administrator
  - Associate/Deputy Wardens
  - Chief of Security
  - Department of Corrections Director's Office and/or Duty Officer
  - other key facility staff
- # development of a general staff notification check list to include addresses and telephone numbers.

## **3. Information Gathering**

When the identity of the offender is known, all relevant facts regarding the escapee shall be gathered. Where appropriate, the issues to address include:

- # relevant facts regarding the offender:
  - name
  - gender
  - AO/JO number
  - age
  - offense
  - physical description (including scars, marks,

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- clothing description
- sentence length
- escape circumstances
- probable companions
- medical issues
- county of conviction/commitment
- tattoos, race and complexion)
- time of escape
- location of escape
- suspected destination
- vehicle description, if applicable

- # collection of information regarding the offender's most recent contacts
- # collection of names and addresses of relatives and friends
- # instituting an interview process to question offenders who may have knowledge of the escape or the offender's destination
- # obtaining photographs of the offender, and
- # victim notification, when applicable.

#### **4. Notification of Department of Corrections, Law Enforcement, Outside Authorities and the Public**

The escape and apprehension plan shall designate an employee responsible for the notification of the Department, law enforcement agencies, outside authorities and the public. These agencies, authorities and the public should be contacted by telephone after the warden/superintendent/administrator has authorized that notification should take place. Telephone numbers of the agencies to be contacted will be listed as part of the plan.

Facilities shall use a standardized Escape Information Report ([Attachment 1](#)) to inform the Department of escapes. The report shall be faxed to the Department when all relevant facts regarding the escapee are gathered. The issues to address include:

- # preparation of the Escapee Wanted Form (Attachments [2](#) and [3](#)) for dissemination to local law enforcement agencies.
- # notification of:

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- the Department (via telephone) - to include provider's information in the Escape Information Report;
- the Montana Highway Patrol, Police Department and Sheriff's Department - to issue "Attempt to Locate" and "Pick-up and Hold" notifications;
- the Montana State Prison (by facilities located outside of Powell County) - to list adult offenders on the NCIC;
- local law enforcement - to list juvenile offender escapees;
- victims and others who may have a compelling interest in the offender's whereabouts;
- the news media;
- law enforcement in other areas when there is reason to believe that the escapee may be traveling to other geographical areas.

## **5. Notification of Local Residents**

Public safety shall be of primary concern in the apprehension of an escapee and, where applicable, the following issues include:

- # activation of an escape alarm
- # activation of a telephone-tree to inform local residents/schools of an escape
- # development of procedural guidelines to update local resident telephone numbers
- # scheduling of public briefings in the event that the escapee is believed to be in a particular area
- # dissemination of Escape Notifications in the community and to local residents in the immediate area.

## **6. Critical Response Actions**

Where applicable, the following issues should be addressed:

- # establishing procedures to secure the housing units/facility and offender's property
- # returning of work crews to their quarters

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- # assessing which staff assignments may be safely vacated to report to a designated assembly area
- # activation of tool security policies
- # accounting for all State and private vehicles
- # determination of how long to keep a facility secured or locked down and when normal activity can resume
- # preservation of evidence that may assist in solving how the escape/attempted escape occurred.

## **7. Firearms and Armory Issues**

The facility policy shall designate a high level of authority to authorize the carrying of firearms during a search.

In those facilities having an armory, procedures must be in place to address the following issues:

- # activation of the Firearms policy
- # activation of the Use of Force policy
- # assignment of an armory officer to issue arms, ammunition and other equipment
- # development of a check list to verify that staff are certified in the use of particular weapons
- # development of provisions to provide the armory officer with additional staff assistance
- # procedures for issuing and returning arms, ammunition and other equipment
- # establish procedures relative to the use of personal firearms.

## **8. Escape Posts**

The existence of escape posts shall be dependent upon the size, security level and role of the correctional facility. Escape posts shall be designated in facilities that house medium/maximum security offenders. The issues to be addressed in designating escape posts include:

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- # predetermination of primary and secondary escape posts. Activation of posts will be determined by a number of factors, to include the time of the escape, means of escape, direction of travel and any other pertinent information.
- # location of escape kits
- # dissemination of escape kits for each post, to incorporate:
  - weapons to be issued
  - restraints
  - a map of the surrounding area
  - a radio or the location of the nearest telephone
  - a flashlight and first aid kit
  - a description of the duties of that post
  - other pertinent information for the officer assigned to the post
- # issuance of a distinctive jacket or insignia that can be clearly identified by law enforcement agencies and the public whenever staff are not in uniform.

## **9. Contacts with the Public**

All correctional staff must be courteous and use good judgement in their contacts with the public, and must cooperate fully with local law enforcement officers, and must obey all laws during searches. All search activities away from the facility shall be coordinated with local law enforcement, and there shall be a mutual aid agreement. Issues to address include:

- # limits of authority possessed by Department personnel when they are not accompanied by law enforcement officers
- # legal limitations in vehicle and house searches as well as in other areas where the search for escapees intrudes on community privacy
- # issuance of a distinctive jacket or insignia that can be clearly identified by law enforcement agencies and the public whenever staff are not in uniform
- # development of community search procedures, in conjunction with local law enforcement.



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## **10. Contacts with the Media**

The escape and apprehension plans shall include a list of media contacts at local newspapers and television and radio stations. The facility Public Information Officer or designee shall be responsible for notifying the media of escapes after the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement have been informed. Data shared with the media may include:

- name
- age
- gender
- physical description (to include scars, marks, tattoos, race and complexion)
- place of conviction
- sentence
- crime committed
- other information that does not violate offender privacy statutes.

Additional issues to be addressed are as follows:

- # assignment of a single staff person to contact the media
- # development of facility policies and procedures to communicate with the media.

## **11. Vehicle Use**

Whenever possible, Department of Corrections vehicles will be used in search efforts for escapees. The issues to address include:

- # issue and return procedures for state vehicles
- # use of privately owned vehicles when state vehicles are not available
- # assignment of vehicle search routes.

## **12. Hostage Situations**

In the event hostages are taken during an escape or attempted escape, the following shall be adhered to:

- # Any official who is taken hostage, regardless of rank or position, loses all command authority. No order from any hostage shall be honored.

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- # No offender or group of offenders using hostages shall be permitted to leave a facility. No offender shall be permitted to leave the area within which he or she is secured.
- # Hostages shall never be exchanged.
- # No weapons shall be given to offenders in exchange for hostages or for any other reason.

Additional issues to address include:

- # utilization of staff/law enforcement hostage negotiators
- # procedures for activation of the Hostage policy.

### **13. Use of Force**

DOC Policy 3.1.8, Use of Force, governs the level of force for each situation. All personnel who may be required to use non-lethal or lethal use of force shall be trained in use of force to DOC Policy 3.1.8.

Additional issues to address include:

- # assurances that staff are authorized/qualified to use firearms as a last resort to prevent escape, protect facility property, and prevent injury or loss of life to personnel or offenders not involved;
- # assurances that the Use of Force policy is well established and staff are trained in the appropriate levels of use of force.

### **14. Escapes While Under Escort or Guard**

Some of the most opportune times for an escape is when an offender is being escorted or transported. For these reasons, it is of the utmost importance that staff are constantly aware that offenders may attempt an escape under these circumstances.

The issues that need to be addressed are:

- # the use of sound security practices in applying restraints and transporting the offender

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- # following procedures to report an escape and in contacting the nearest law enforcement agency to request assistance
- # establishing escape posts if the escape occurs near the facility.

### **15. Aircraft-Assisted Escape Attempts**

For those facilities where the potential exists for aircraft-assisted escapes, the following issues must be addressed:

- # guidelines when and when not to fire upon an aircraft
- # use of firearms to prevent an offender from approaching a hovering or landed aircraft
- # protective guidelines to follow when staff are under fire from an aircraft
- # development of procedures to describe the craft, its identification numbers, direction of flight, and any other pertinent details and reporting this information to law enforcement, FAA, and other agencies with aircraft capability
- # utilization of an action plan when assistance is required for a ground search of the craft.

### **16. Facility Reports and Escape Investigation Report**

Comprehensive and accurate reports are essential in the subsequent prosecution of escapees. Whenever possible, facility reports will contain photographs documenting any damages, additional crimes committed, and the method or route of the escape. The following individuals will submit a facility report at the end of the search, or if the search is protracted, prior to leaving the facility at the end of their shift:

- # Employees witnessing the escape or who are responsible for the detail or area from which the escape occurred
- # Civilian or law enforcement agency witnesses to the escape or subsequent flight
- # Employees to whom the escape was reported
- # Employees assigned to provide notification of the escape to other agencies
- # Senior shift supervisors

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- # Employees, civilians, and law enforcement officers held as hostages (when the hostage situation has been resolved)
- # Employees and law enforcement officers involved in the actual search
- # Perimeter staff
- # Other staff members having relevant information.

Additional issues to be addressed include:

- # guidelines for assessing and recording any damage caused by the offender
- # guidelines for preserving any evidence that may be of value in presenting the case in court
- # procedures to pursue charges against the offender
- # basic information regarding the escape
- # debriefing
- # recommendations for preventing similar escapes or escape attempts.

An Escape Investigation Report shall be prepared by the Department's Investigation Unit and submitted within 48 hours of the escape or attempted escape to the appropriate Division Administrator.

## **17. Post-Apprehension Procedures**

When the Department's Investigation Unit receives word that an escapee has been apprehended, or is in the custody of another agency or jurisdiction, they shall prepare and distribute an Apprehension Report to the law enforcement agencies who were notified of the escape, correctional facilities and the appropriate Division Administrator. The Unit shall also notify the Department's Public Information Officer who shall provide details of the apprehension to the news media.

Additional issues to be addressed include:

- # victim notification

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- # cancellation of all Attempts To Locate, Pick-Up and Hold, and other escape notices/warrants
- # reporting/investigation requirements established to assist in the prosecution of the escapee
- # initiation of the offender disciplinary process.

### **18. Offender Accountability for Escape**

To help deal effectively with varying degrees of risk represented by offenders who have a history of escapes from a correctional facility. Each facility will establish an internal management plan for these offenders. The issues to address include:

- # appropriate housing (custody level) based on the offender's risk assessment
- # jobs and activities the offender is eligible and/or not eligible for
- # participation in open houses, cursillos, or similar activities that allow offenders to mix with the public
- # earned incentive level.

The following factors should be taken into account when formulating internal management plans to reduce risk of offender escape:

- (a) number of prison escapes/walkaways,
- (b) circumstances surrounding any prior escapes, (i.e., were there hostages taken, weapons involved, etc.,)
- (c) loss of good time due to the escape violation,
- (d) felony convictions while on escape status,
- (e) sentence length,
- (f) future risk for escape; and
- (g) conduct records, including whether the offender can function in a low security housing/work assignment or has shown through his/her history that he/she will abuse the freedom.

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**V. CLOSING:**

Questions concerning this policy shall be directed to the Warden, Superintendent, Community Correctional Facility Director, or the Department's Investigation Unit.

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
ESCAPE INFORMATION REPORT**

OFFENDER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AO#/JO#: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

ESCAPED FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ CURRENT OFFENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

SENTENCE/COMMITMENT (include date, county, and length of sentence/commitment): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF OFFENDER'S SITUATION AND LAST SUSPECTED WHEREABOUTS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ACTION TAKEN TO LOCATE OFFENDER/WHO WAS NOTIFIED? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OFFENDER'S PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AT TIME OF ESCAPE:

Clothing: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Complexion: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Scars/Marks/Tattoos: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ESCAPE CIRCUMSTANCES (state how, where, and when the escape occurred): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_SUSPECTED DESTINATION AND MODE OF TRANSPORTATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**(To be completed by Central Office)**

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**PAROLE ELIGIBLE DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DISCHARGE DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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FORM COMPLETED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_